

Catalogue of American Amphibians and Reptiles.

DODD, C. KENNETH, JR. 1980. *Ameiva polops*.

***Ameiva polops* Cope
St. Croix ground lizard**

Ameiva polops Cope, 1862:66. Type-locality, "St. Croix, [U.S. Virgin Islands] West Indies." Holotype, U.S. Natl. Mus. 30695, collected by A. H. Riise (date unknown). Examined by author.

Ameiva Örstedii Reinhardt and Lütken, 1863:232. Type-locality, "St. Croix." Syntypes, Universitetets Zoologiske Mus., Copenhagen R.4356 (St. Croix), and R.4355 (St. John), according to Schwartz and Thomas (1975:61), the latter locality probably erroneous. Type-specimens not examined by author. See REMARKS.

- CONTENT. No subspecies are recognized.

- DEFINITION. A small species of *Ameiva* (adults 50–65 mm snout-vent length) with ten (occasionally twelve) longitudinal rows of ventral scales, dorsal caudal scales in oblique rows, median gular scales enlarged, preanal scales in two parallel longitudinal series, and 33–39 femoral pores. There is a wide (2.5–3 mm in a 55 mm adult) light brown middorsal stripe, bordered by wide (1–1.5 mm) dark brown or black stripes. Below this are parallel stripes in the following order: narrow brown, narrow black, narrow white, and, bordering the ventral scales, mottled dark brown. Continuing onto the tail are the middorsal stripe and bordering stripes, and the narrow white stripes—the others are indistinct. The tail also has alternating rings of blue and black, the blue rings wider (covering 2 scale rows) than the black. The top of the head is uniform brown. Chin, throat, chest, sides of the snout and undersides of the forelegs are deep pinkish-red. There is some pink color on the undersides of the hind legs and underside of the tail. The belly is light gray with lateral bluish markings.

- DESCRIPTIONS. Cope (1862) gives information on scale pattern and general notes on coloration. Other descriptions are in Reinhardt and Lütken (1863), Boulenger (1885), and Barbour and Noble (1915). Grant (1937) gives color notes and measurements. Heatwole and Torres (1967) provide a detailed color description, notes on color variation, and graphs of variation in meristic characters.

- ILLUSTRATIONS. A black and white photograph of a preserved specimen is provided by Heatwole and Torres (1967), and a black and white photograph of a color sketch by Grant (1937). Line drawings of scutellation are in Bocourt (1874:plate 20B, figs. 4, 4a–4c). A black and white photograph of a live specimen is in Philibosian and Yntema (1977).

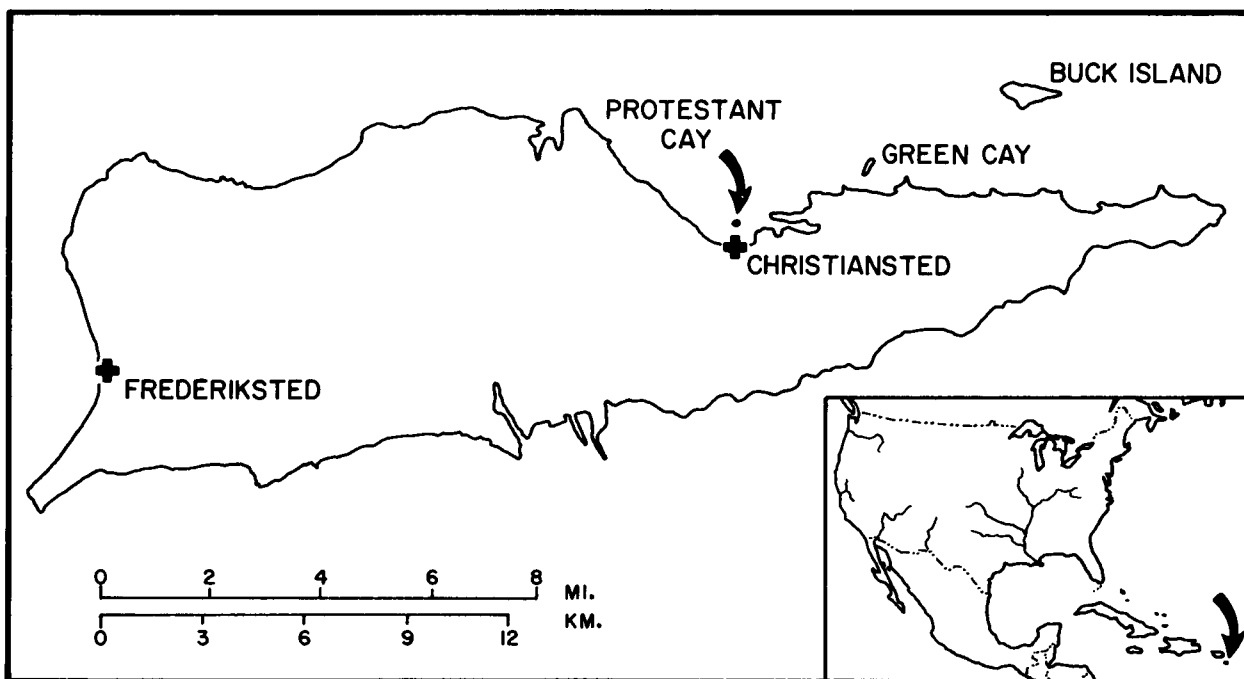
- DISTRIBUTION. Historically, this species is known from the vicinity of Frederiksted (from the shoreline inland 30 meters, from Two Brothers north to Fort Frederick), and Christiansted (from the shoreline inland 50 meters, from Fort Christian to East Point), St. Croix, U.S. Virgin Islands. It is now confined to Green and Protestant cays off the north shore of St. Croix. Records from St. Thomas (Bocourt, 1874) are in error (Grant, 1937:510–511).

- FOSSIL RECORD. None.

- PERTINENT LITERATURE. The literature on this species is scant, and there are no comprehensive works on its biology. Its relationship with other *Ameiva* species is treated by Reinhardt and Lütken (1863), Bocourt (1874), Cochran (1941), and Heatwole and Torres (1967). Comments on distribution are in Barbour (1930a, 1937), Grant (1937), Underwood (1962), Philibosian and Ruibal (1971), and Anon. (1973). General comments on environment and foraging activity are in Heatwole and Torres (1967), and on food in Grant (1937), Heatwole and Torres (1967), and Philibosian and Ruibal (1971). Seaman and Randall (1962), Baskin and Williams (1966), Philibosian and Ruibal (1971), and Philibosian and Yntema (1976) present data on the effect of mongoose predation on populations of this species. Philibosian and Yntema (1976) document an unsuccessful attempt to introduce the species on Buck Island. *Ameiva polops* was listed by Stejneger (1904), Barbour (1914, 1930b, 1935), Schmidt (1928), Grant (1932), Underwood (1962), and Schwartz and Thomas (1975). Dodd (1978) provides a general overview of the status and biology of this species.

- ETYMOLOGY. Underwood (1962) noted that *polops* is derived from the Greek *polyopes*, meaning "with many holes," perhaps in reference to the large number of femoral pores.

- REMARKS. Grant (1937) suggested that *Ameiva polops* may be found in museum collections labeled as "*Ameiva exsul*," because of confusion resulting from the variability of *A. exsul*. Bocourt (1874) gave *polops* as a junior synonym of *örstedii*, presum-



MAP. St. Croix, U.S. Virgin Islands, showing present known distribution of *Ameiva polops* (Protestant Cay and Green Cay) and former areas of distribution (Frederiksted and Christiansted).

ably on the basis of the 1862 date on the Reinhardt and Lütken paper.

COMMENT

Ameiva polops is now confined to Green and Protestant cays in the U.S. Virgin Islands. Small populations persisted until 1920 at Christiansted, and 1968 at Frederiksted, but were apparently eliminated by habitat destruction and predation by mongooses. An attempt to establish this species on nearby Buck Island was unsuccessful, again presumably because of mongoose predation. Another attempt will be made to introduce it on Buck Island, if mongoose trapping efforts are successful (Philibosian, pers. comm.). On Green and Protestant cays, which together have an area of about 15 acres, a population of 300 lizards survives. The species is listed as Endangered by the U.S. Department of the Interior, and "Critical Habitat" has been determined as both cays.

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